

If US Foreign Policy Toward Palestine Is Any Indication, “Trump Is Here to Stay”

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As I watch the unfolding political drama of the impeachment trial in the US Senate, the glimmer of hope for change I had following the incredible scenes at the Capitol on Jan 6 is being dimmed. The question in my mind now is whether it is even possible, with the tools being used by Joe Biden, to turn the tide on Trump’s movement.

The US news media is marveling that, for the first time ever, a president has denounced white supremacy “by name” in an inaugural address. The hashtag #EndWhiteSupremacy is gaining currency. But I believe the rallying cry generated in opposition to Trump’s nativist, xenophobic and racist politics, the same elements that had shaped the politics of the first half of the twentieth century, is insufficient to turn the face of this country toward its “better angels.”

The devil is in both the details and history. Some activists are already raising [the alarm](#) that “moves to combat far-right extremism will instead redound against communities of color and leftwing activists.”

Others, like a friend commenting on my post that attempted to make sense of why only a handful of Republicans in the Senate had voted for the impeachment trial to take place (the vote was 54 to 45 in favor), believe that “The GOP want power, and contesting an election or assaulting the Capitol doesn’t faze them. The Dems are living in a dream world, like the late Weimar politicians.”

After being confirmed by the Senate as secretary of state, in a stunningly oblivious statement, ignoring the fact that half the American government is afraid of one man, Antony Blinken had this to say during an interview with Andrea Mitchell: “It remains striking to me how concerned and maybe even scared the Russian government seems to be of one man, Mr Navalny.”

Many people outside politics are trying to grapple with the fact that, for all practical purposes, jury nullification is built into this Senate impeachment trial (as it was in the first). The upcoming trial (to begin Feb 8) appears to be merely a political exercise meant “for history” to record, not a vehicle to showcase truth, justice and accountability. We just have to live with it. We have to live with the version that gives credence to, in Trump’s words, “a

continuation of the greatest witch-hunt in history!"

I am no stranger to witnessing slavish loyalty to unprincipled movements. As a Palestinian American, I have witnessed the misplaced and deeply-entrenched US loyalty to Israel and Israel only, no matter how egregious its actions become (think of Obama administration's defense of Israel's brutalizing a civilian population when bombing besieged Gaza in 2014). When I hear phrases like "Trump *owned* them," (meaning the insurrectionists), I understand immediately that such a thing is possible.

Haven't books been written on how Israel and its allies "own" US foreign policy on Israel/Palestine? When I hear paranoid inversions of reality and fact such as the Capitol rioters saying, "they are locking us down, taking away our freedom and our country, too," I think of all the hasbara Israel has deployed over the years with talking points that aim to invert reality, so much so that, in many people's minds, Israel is still perceived as being viciously mistreated and the people it victimizes, the oppressed and dispossessed Palestinian people, are perceived as the victimizers.

Long before Trump's account was removed from Twitter for misinformation, as journalist Daoud Kuttab [wrote](#) way back in 2015,

paid individuals, often university students, [who are hired](#) by the office of the prime minister of Israel to respond quickly and fiercely to anyone daring to criticise the state of Israel and its actions... Many commentators are not traceable to any real individual because they use pseudonyms. On Twitter, where there is much debate surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, some anti-Palestine comments or reactions come from pages with 25 followers and little activity; one begins to doubt whether these are genuine Twitter users.

And the campaign to invert reality and entrench doublespeak regarding Israel and its apartheid, supremacist Zionist ideology is still being waged on social media today. As I write this, a petition launched by American Muslims for Palestine (AMP) and Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) states: "The Israeli government is pressuring Facebook to add critical usage of the word 'Zionist' to its hate speech policy. If Facebook restricts use of the word 'Zionist,' how can Palestinians describe our daily lives under Israeli apartheid, or discuss our families' history?"

Trump may have failed to reverse the election, but he continues to reverse reality. As a Palestinian American, I ought to be inured to denials of reality in the highest places in the US as well as on social media. Still, it's devastating for me to realize that Trump is the beginning of something that is here to stay, that the sacking of the Capitol, for all its farcical elements as the "stupid coup," is the who-we-are coup according to millions and their Republican enablers in the Senate and that Democrats have no clue how to stop them.

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Featured image: Trump and Netanyahu's love affair around Jerusalem and Palestine's fate - Cartoon [Sabaaneh/MiddleEastMonitor]

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